

The Night of Resurrection

I soon after beheld the tomb of our Lord. All was calm and silent around it.

There were six soldiers on guard, who were either seated or standing before the door, and Cassius was among them. His appearance was that of a person immersed in meditation and in the expectation of some great event. The sacred body of our Blessed Redeemer was wrapped in the winding-sheet, and

surrounded with light, while two angels sat in an attitude of adoration, the one at the head,

and the other at the feet. I had seen them in the same posture ever since he was first put into the tomb. These angels were clothed as priests. Their position, and the manner in which they crossed their arms over their breasts, reminded me of the cherubim who surrounded the Ark of the covenant, only they were without wings; at least I did not see any. The whole of the sepulchre reminded me of the Ark of the Covenant at different periods of its history. It is possible that Cassius was sensible of the presence of the angels, and of the bright light which filled the sepulchre, for his attitude was like that of a person in deep contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament. I next saw the soul of our Lord accompanied by those among the patriarchs whom he had liberated enter into the tomb through the rock. He showed them the wounds with which his sacred body was covered; and it seemed to me that the winding-sheet which previously enveloped it was removed, and that Jesus wished to show the souls the excess of suffering he had endured to redeem them. The body appeared to me to be quite transparent, so that the whole depth of the wounds could be seen; and this sight filled the holy souls with admiration, although deep feelings of compassion likewise drew tears from their eyes.



My next vision was so mysterious that I cannot explain or even relate it in a clear manner. It appeared to me that the soul and body of Jesus were taken together out of the sepulchre, without, however, the former being completely reunited to the latter, which still remained inanimate. I thought I saw two angels who were kneeling and adoring at the head and feet of the sacred body, raise it—keeping it in the exact position in which it was lying in the tomb—and carry it uncovered and disfigured with wounds across the rock, which trembled as they passed. It then appeared to me that Jesus presented his body, marked with

the stigmas of the Passion, to his Heavenly Father, who, seated on a throne, was surrounded by innumerable choirs of angels, blissfully occupied in pouring forth hymns of adoration and jubilee. The case was probably the same when at the death of our Lord, so many holy souls re-entered their bodies, and appeared in the Temple and in different parts of Jerusalem; for it is not likely that the bodies which they animated were really alive, as in that case they would have been obliged to die a second time, whereas they returned to their original state without apparent difficulty; but it is to be supposed that their appearance in human form was similar to that of our Lord, when he (if we may thus express it) accompanied his body to the throne of his Heavenly Father. At this moment the rock was so violently shaken, from the very summit to the base, that three of the guards fell down and became almost insensible. The other four were away at the time, being gone to the town to fetch something. The guards who were thus thrown prostrate attributed the sudden shock to an earthquake; but Cassius, who, although uncertain as to what all this might portend, yet felt an inward presentiment that it was the prelude to some stupendous event, stood transfixed in anxious expectation, waiting to see what would follow next. The soldiers who were gone to Jerusalem soon returned.

I again beheld the holy women: they had finished preparing the spices, and were resting in their private cells; not stretched out on the couches, but leaning against the bedclothes, which were rolled up. They wished to go to the sepulchre before the break of day, because they feared meeting the enemies of Jesus; but the Blessed Virgin, who was perfectly renovated and filled with fresh courage since she had seen her Son, consoled and recommended them to sleep for a time, and then go fearlessly to the tomb, as no harm would come to them; whereupon they immediately followed her advice, and endeavoured to sleep.

It was towards eleven o'clock at night when the Blessed Virgin, incited by irrepressible feelings of love, arose, wrapped a grey cloak around her, and left the house quite alone. When I saw her do this, I could not help feeling anxious, and saying to myself, 'How is it possible for this holy Mother, who is so exhausted from anguish and terror, to venture to walk all alone through the streets at such an hour?' I saw her go first to the house of Caiphas, and then to the palace of Pilate, which was at a great distance off; I watched her through the whole of her solitary journey along that part which

had been trodden by her Son, loaded with his heavy Cross; she stopped at every place where our Saviour had suffered particularly, or had received any fresh outrage from his barbarous enemies. Her appearance, as she walked slowly along, was that of a person seeking something; she often bent down to the ground, touched the stones with her hands, and then inundated them with kisses, if the precious blood of her beloved Son was upon them. God granted her at this time particular lights and graces, and she was able without the slightest degree of difficulty to distinguish every place sanctified by his sufferings. I accompanied her through the whole of her pious pilgrimage, and I endeavoured to imitate her to the best of my power, as far as my weakness would permit.

Mary then went to Calvary; but when she had almost reached it, she stopped suddenly, and I saw the sacred body and soul of our Saviour standing before her. An angel walked in front; the two angels whom I had seen in the tomb were by his side, and the souls whom he had redeemed followed him by hundreds. The body of Jesus was brilliant and beautiful, but its appearance was not that of a living body, although a voice issued from it; and I heard him describe to the Blessed Virgin all he had done in Limbo, and then assure her that he should rise again with his glorified body; that he would then show himself to her, and that she must wait near the rock of Mount Calvary, and that part where she saw him fall down, until he appeared. Our Saviour then went towards Jerusalem, and the Blessed Virgin, having again wrapped her veil about her, prostrated on the spot which he had pointed out. It was then, I think, past midnight, for the pilgrimage of Mary over the Way of the Cross had taken up at least an hour; and I next saw the holy souls who had been redeemed by our Saviour traverse in their turn the sorrowful Way of the Cross, and contemplate the different places where he had endured such fearful sufferings for their sakes.

The angels who accompanied them gathered sacred flesh which had been torn off by the frequent blows he received, as also the blood with which the ground was sprinkled on those spots where he had fallen. I once more saw the sacred body of our Lord stretched out as I first beheld it in the sepulchre; the angels were occupied in replacing the garments they had gathered up of his flesh, and they received supernatural assistance in doing this. When next I contemplated him it was in his winding-sheet, surrounded with a bright light and with two adoring angels by his side. I cannot explain how all these things came to pass, for they are far beyond our human comprehension; and even if

I understand them perfectly myself when I see them, they appear dark and mysterious when I endeavour to explain them to others.

As soon as a faint glimmering of dawn appeared in the east, I saw Magdalen, Mary the daughter of Cleophas, Johanna Chusa, and Salome, leave the Cenaculum, closely wrapped up in their mantles. They carried bundles of spices; and one of their number had a lighted candle in her hand, which she endeavoured to conceal under her cloak. I saw them direct their trembling steps towards the small door at the house of Nicodemus.